CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of managing user privacy in a network environment, comprising:

recognizing one or more service opportunities of a service operator on a user device operated by a user;

determining a privacy level at which communications is conducted with a service operator; and

conducting the communications with the service operator at the privacy level.

2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the recognizing comprises automatically discovering the one or more service opportunities.

3. The method according to claim 2, wherein the user device is a BLUETOOTH-enabled wireless communications device which automatically discovers service opportunities.

4. The method according to claim 1, wherein the recognizing comprises anonymously obtaining information relating to the one or more service opportunities.

23112_1

5.   The method according to claim 4, wherein the information relating to the one or more service opportunities comprises one of a service category, a service description and a requested viewpoint.

6.   The method according to claim 5, further comprising allowing the service provider to obtain access to a subset of profile information of the user according to the service category.

7.   The method according to claim 6, further comprising providing personalized service to the user according to the subset of profile information.

8.   The method according to claim 5, further comprising allowing the service provider to obtain a subset of profile information of the user according to the requested viewpoint.

9.   The method according to claim 8, further comprising providing personalized service to the user according to the subset of profile information.

10.   The method according to claim 1, wherein the privacy level includes one of Anonymous, Pseudonymous, Anonymous transaction and Authenticated.

23112_1

11.   The method according to claim 1, wherein the determining a privacy level determines a privacy level based on the nature of the service negotiations with the service operator.

12.   The method according to claim 1, wherein the determining a privacy level determines a privacy level based on a level of privacy in one or more prior transactions with the specific service operator.

13.   The method according to claim 1, wherein the determining a privacy level determines a privacy level based on the identity of the service operator.

14.   The method according to claim 1, wherein the determining a privacy level determines a privacy level based on user-defined parameters.

15.   The method according to claim 1, wherein the determining a privacy level determines a privacy level based on the user's prior behavior or activity.

16.   The method according to claim 1, further comprising obtaining a user identifier to conduct pseudonymous communications with the service operator relating to the one or more service opportunities.

23112_1

17.   The method according to claim 12, further comprising allowing the service provider to obtain access to a predefined subset of profile information.

18.   The method according to claim 1, further comprising allowing the service provider to obtain access to a subset of profile information.

19.   The method according to claim 18, wherein the service provider is charged a fee for obtaining the subset of profile information.

20.   The method according to claim 18, wherein the service provider obtains the subset of profile information from a profile operator remotely located from the user device.

21.   The method according to claim 20, wherein the allowing the service provider comprises:

determining a profile access level; and

transmitting the profile access level to the service operator,

wherein the service operator obtains a subset of profile information from a profile operator according to the profile access level.

22.   The method according to claim 21, wherein the determining a profile access determines the profile access level according a service category of the one or more service opportunities.

23.   The method according to claim 21, wherein the determining a profile access determines the profile access level based upon a prior arrangement between the service operator and the user.

24.   The method according to claim 18, further comprising updating the profile information of the user.

25.   The method according to claim 24, wherein the profile information of the user is updated based on user information provided by the service operator.

26.   The method according to claim 25, wherein the service operator is compensated for providing the user information.

27.   The method according to claim 24, further comprising tracking user activity on the user device, wherein the profile information of the user is updated based on the tracked user activity.

23112_1

28. The method according to claim 1, wherein the service opportunities recognized by the user are dynamically changed by the service provider.

29. The method according to claim 28, wherein the service opportunities recognized by the user are dynamically changed by the service provider according to profile information of the user.

30. The method according to claim 1, wherein the user device and the service operator communicate across a personal area network.

31. The method according to claim 1, wherein the user device comprises a mobile wireless device.

32. The method according to claim 1, further comprising receiving service from the service operator.

33. The method according to claim 32, wherein payment for the service obtained by the user is conducted anonymously.

34. A method of managing user privacy in a network environment through a distributed user system including a user device and profile operator, comprising:

23112_1

recognizing one or more service opportunities of a service operator on a user device operated by a user;

determining a privacy level at which communications is conducted with a service operator relating to the one or more service opportunities on the user device;

determining a profile access level on the user device;

transmitting the profile access level to the service operator; and

enabling the service operator to obtain a subset of profile information of the user according to the profile access level.